

The Athenian Mercury.

Monday, June 14. 1697.

Quest 1. **I** Verily believe the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, but yet must confess I have met with several Objections against it, which I wish

I could see clearly Answer'd. The Principal are these following. 1. That 'tis not so much as pretended to be believ'd, any more than the Trinity, by the *Gens* and Heathens. 2. That all the Texts that are brought to prove it out of the Scriptures, are given up by one Writer, or other, as ineffectual for that End. 3. That Polytheism is not objected against the Ancient Christians by their Adversaries, which they would not have omitted had they worshipt our Saviour. Nor, 4. They say, is there any thing to be found relating to his Divinity, in the first Christian Writers, Clemens, and the rest, — which, in the 5th place they conclude was introduc'd into the Church from the Schools of Plato, when the Christians began to be infected with his vain Philosophy, about the Time of the Nicene Council. If you please to solve these difficulties, I believe you may do service to Religion, and oblige many others as well as Yours, &c.

Answer. We have reply'd to the former part of the rest of these Objections, in Numb. 2. As to the *Jews*. We proceed to the 2d part of it, which relates to the Heathen. And that the Learned amongst 'em did believe a Trinity, and consequently a 2d Person, and him God; surely there's little need of proving, when the 5th Objection is grounded upon it, and it has given occasion to one of the most plausible pleas which the Adversaries of this Doctrine produce against it. Nothing can give what it has not, and if the Christians Learnt the Trinity from the Platonists, which however we shall hereafter prove, they never did, they must have had it to teach them. But we need not be oblig'd either to their Concessions, or Objections, since it has already been abundantly prov'd by Learned Men, that the most Ancient and Learned of the Heathens, of almost all Sects. did own a Trinity; and if not exactly in the same manner with the Orthodox, that has been accounted for already in the former Mercury.

1. The most Ancient Chaldaic and Persian Philosophers, the followers of Zoroaster, did assert it. Mithras is call'd, *ἱερακιστος*, or Treble, amongst 'em. This Dionisius Witnesse of Mithras, and Plutarch does the same of Ormazdes, (whence Cudworth concludes they were the same Deity) further affirming of Zoroaster, that he made a Three-fold distribution of Things. And Proclus, from the Chaldaic traditional Theology, affirms, that the whole World was compleated by Three: Namely Psyche, or the mundan Soul, Zus, or Jupiter, and the Demiurgus, or Maker of the World.

2. A Trinity was also acknowledg'd in the Orphaic Philosophy, which was famous long before Aristotle; and the Orphean Hymns are quoted and condemned by Plato, Hiraclitus, Tully, and several others. Which appears, first from that Hieroglyphic, wherein he describes the Deity in such a manner, that his Pagan Interpreters did thereby understand Three Principles. 1. An Incorporeal Mind, or Jupiter, the supreme Father. 2. Hercules, or his Son. 3. Nature, or the Spirit, or Soul of the World: Again Suidas says of him, that he ascribes Three Names, Life, Counsel, and Light, to the Maker of all things; Which in Proclus are call'd, Phanes, Uranus, and Chronus, from the same Orpheus. Damascio says the same, that Orpheus introduc'd, *ἱερακιστος θεον*, a Triform God: And Timotheus the Chronographer affirms the same with Suidas before, as Cedrenus assures us.

3. The same seems to be asserted in the Genuine Egyptian Philosophy, as we have it from Heathens themselves, and not only from Christians, Cheremon in Porphyry telling us, that they held these three Principles, Mind, Reason, and Nature: Many other Instances of the like kind we might produce out of the Hermaic Writings, which we at present omit, because of the Objections which Casaubon and others raise against them; tho their chief prejudice is easily answer'd. The Notions in 'em, say they, are purely Platonical, and therefore Novel, and not Genuine; but this is by no means a just consequence, for both Plato and Pythagoras, as is notoriously known, had most of their Reasonings of this Nature from the Egyptians: Nay, Plato borrows at 2d hand too, and had many of his from Pythagoras. But of this more hereafter.

4. Pythagoras held a Trinity. The Monas, the Nous, and the Psyche. Plutarch tells us, that he call'd the First Hypostasis, *τὸ ἐν*, and *μόνας*, and *τὸ Ἀγαθόν*. And indeed, if Pythagoras held the same Doctrines with Orpheus, as 'tis evident for the most part he did, he must also own a Trinity.

Parmonides also, if we may believe Plato concerning him, held and taught the same, tho as some of the others, not in the same manner with the Christians, afterwards, for the Heathens we think, did generally believe Three subordinate Unities. The *ἐν τὸ πᾶν*; *ἐν πολλὰ*, and *ἐν καὶ πολλὰ*; one-All; one-many; and one-and many.

5. As for Plato, we suppose he'll be Given us. For none can deny his, *τὸ ἐν*, his *νοῦς*, or *διαιρέτης*, and his *ψυχή*. Or that he calls the first Hypostasis the Father, the second, the Logos, Word, or Reason, or Counsel (as Orpheus

Orpheus before him) and asserts him the Maker of the World.

6. *Plutarch*, the most Learned of the Pagan Authors, and best vers'd in their Mystic Theology, as well Egyptian as more Modern, has several Passages which look the same way, as cannot but be observ'd by any who carefully read him: Particularly, we took Notice of that which *Dr. Cudworth* mentions, concerning *Thespesius Solensis*, who reviving from a long Extasy, affirm'd, that while he lay in that condition he saw Three Gods, in the Form of a Triangle, pouring streams into one another. And this *Plutarch* mentions, as not himself disbelieving it. And what follows; Of *Orpheus* his Soul, going so far as this Triangle plainly refers, to his Doctrine of the Trinity already mention'd.

7. Let any one read *Julian the Apostates* Works, especially his oration *de matre Deorum*, and they'll find it not a Trinity expressly, yet a Father and Son; to which most of 'em add, after the *Platonists* and *Pythagoreans*, a 3d Principle, or Soul of the World. Tho this Ancient Divine tradition miserably deform'd with their Novel, Poetical, or Physiological Fables. For Example, what they found in the Ancient Oracles, or Philosophers concerning the Father, or Fountain of all things, they numerically attribute to their *Jupiter*: What to the Son, to *Hercules*; or to the Sun in the Firmament, which some of 'em reckon'd the Body of the *Demiurgus*, or Maker of the World: What to the Spirit, they to *Pallas*, or it may be to *Isis*, or *Cybele*; which sometimes they make the Mother of the Gods, sometimes the Daughter of *Jupiter*, as they also made the *Logos*, or *Evas*. Sometimes the First, sometimes the Last of their Deities: Nor can we tell how to think, that some strange Passages which we read in *Epictetus* and others, concerning the Son of God, and which we doubt not others also have observ'd, were borrow'd from the Christians, as has been the Opinion of some Learned Men, because 'tis hardly probable the Philosophers would be beholden for these things, to those whom they so much despise, and so mortally persecuted and hated; whence it appears to us more probable, that they had 'em from the Ancient *Arcana* of their own Writers. And we could prove some Footsteps of a Trinity also, and particularly of God the Son in several other Nations, who have had no converse with the Learned *VVorld*. But shall only instance at present in the Inhabitants of *Ceylon*, who, as *Knox* tells us, in his Account of their Divinity, after the supreme God, sit'd in their Language, *ossa-polla-maupt*, the Original and Governor of all things, do believe a Second God, whom they call *Buddow*, to whom the salvation of Souls belongs. But we hope this will suffice, and we may rest this part of the Argument here, till we see what we have advanc'd, fairly answer'd, and if we have in our Answer to the second Branch of the first Objection, prov'd more than we undertook, Namely, that the Trinity it self, as well as the Divinity of a Son of God, was in great measure known to the Learned Heathen *VVorld*, we hope, none will be angry with us, for giving over-measure, and being better than our word.

An IDEA of Mr. Turner's History of the most Remarkable Providences which have hapned in this Present Age, lately Publish'd.

THE Materials which the Author has made use of are the Best Authors who wrote before him on that subject, and the Manuscripts and Informations of such Persons of Note (now living) as were pleas'd to Communicate fit matter to him, of whom he hath very Ingeniously exhibit'd a Catalogue at the End of his Introduction, besides the great Number of other Persons, and Modern books, that he cites throughout the Work.

The Method he follows, is to rank every thing under its proper Head, of which there are 150 in the first Part, that may most properly be call'd, *The History of Providence*. There are 56 Heads in the 2d Part, which contain the Wonders of Nature-- and 17 Heads in the 3d, which give an Account of the Curiosities of Art, and all those subdivided into Particular Instances; many of which are new and extraordinary, and upon the whole, it must be own'd to be the most Compleat Collection of the Kind that is extant, and cannot but be useful and entertaining to Men of all Parties and Capacities--Mr. Turner is very happy in his Introductory Prefaces to every distinct Head, wherein he does express the meaning and design of that Head clearly and concisely, by such General Observations and Truths as no Party of Christians can well controvert.

His First Chapter treats concerning the Appearance and Manifestation of God himself in the World.

His Chapters of the Appearances of Good and bad Angels, &c. Contain the Marrow of all that pleasant and diverting Part of History, that is to be found in other Authors, besides many NEW INSTANCES never before publish'd; which are enough to convince the Scepticks and Atheists of the Age; the same may be said as to his Chapters of the Appearance of separate Souls, the discovery of Secrets, or things to come by Audible Voices, Signs, Sounds, Dreams, Visions, and Impulses, &c.

His disquisition upon the *Urim*, *Thummim*, *Teraphim*, &c. Is Curious and Learned; His Premonitions of General, or Particular Changes and Accidents of Life, &c. Is of the like Nature. And his Instances of strange Conversions and Conversions, (particularly that late instance of Mr. Studly, a *Kentish* Gentleman, sent to him by a worthy Person now living in *Hogsdon-square*) are surprising. At the End of this Chapter is added, A Remarkable Account of the Conversions of several Indians, with the dying Speeches of 8 of them; as Publish'd by the Reverend Mr. Eliot, the First Preacher of the Gospel to the Heathen Indians in America. These Relations were sent to Mr. Turner, by a Friend of his that brought them with him, from Boston in New England; and are so great a RARITY, that 'twas with great difficulty he procured them in New England (where they were Printed) neither was there a Copy of them to be found in London.

To the Chapter of Remarkable Zeal is annex'd Mr. *Albyn's* Evidences for Heaven (subscrib'd by Mr. *Calamy* and two other Divines, as sufficient Grounds of assurance for Heaven); these Evidences were never printed before, and are of great use to direct us throughout the whole course of our Lives.

In short, here is fit entertainment for Persons of all sorts, and in all conditions, many late Instances to encourage PIETY AND DEVOTION, several Chapters of Remarkable Judgments upon Sins of all sorts, to deter the wicked from their mischievous Practices.

The Author hath particularly provided for the CURIOUS in his Accounts of LAST WILLS, which are remarkable either for the singularity of themselves, or of the Testators, and it cannot chuse but be an acceptable Entertainment to see here the LAST WILLS of *Calvin* and *Bellarmino*, the two Great Antesignans of their several Parties; by which the difference of the Spirits, with which they were Acted is very discernable. This Chapter also contains the Modern Wills of the most eminent Persons that have dyed in this present Age; no less diverting is Mr. Turner's Collection of odd Epitaphs, and there's no doubt, but the Chapter containing the Memorable Speeches and sayings of the late Mary, from her Birth down to the time of her Death, will be very acceptable, as will the Chapter of those Executed in *K. James's* time.